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Ex-Secretary of the

Navy Points Out

What Must Be

Done to Make Our

Fighting Fleet

Ready to Meet

By GEORGE VON L. MEYER, Ex-Secretary of the Navy.

RESUMABLY the President has

they may make an estimate of the sit-

uation in case the country should be

involved in war with Germany. This

estimate would include military and

industrial requirements of the army

and navy, i. e., the assembling of raw

materials, ammunition, food and cloth-

ing supplies, their destination and

In case of war with any country

across the Atlantic or Pacific the bur-

den in the first instance will fall upon

the fleet. It will be the duty of the

To insure success the ficet must be thoroughly manned and equipped and

Should our battleships fail to de-

necessary for submarines and floating

mines to protect our principal har-

bors, those that are accessible on ac-

count of the depth of water, and this

support should be supplemented by a

Coast Artillery and such mobile troops as could be assembled at various points

A bill has already been introduced in

Congress which would enable the Pres-

ident to take possession during war

of the ammunition, shipbuilding and

torpedo plants in this country. We

are wofully short of the latter and

also of other ammunition, particularly

· Unfortunately Mr. Daniels in the

first year of his administration cut

down the ammunition appropriation

about ten millions; a very short

their transportation.

ships.

along the coast.

floating mines.

called together a joint Army

and Navy Board in order that

an Enemy

THE DEFENCE OF NEW YORK

Lack of Protection in Time of War Might Be Fatal to Whole Nation. Since It Is Gateway to Country's Munition Storehouse

By ROBERT G. SKERRETT.

TEW YORKERS would have more than common reason for concern in the event of war. They have reared a civic marvel that would be logically the prime objective of a foe's attack. Here industry and business in their manifold expressions have concentrated wealth to the value of many hundreds of millions of dollars. But that els not

Within a rallus of something like two hundred miles lie the great bulk of America's military thews in the form of steel plants, gun factories, powder mills, oil works, &c., not to mention indispensable deposits of motive fuel-coal. New York is virtually the key to this treasure house of defensive strength. A foe would seek to dominate this city from the begin-

What, then, is the state of the de-fences of New York? In what do they consist?

American military experts long ago realized the primacy of the Port of New York and set about providing for its permanent defence. They placed at strategic points along the sea approaches great crouching rifles and batteries of hidden mortars, which should dominate wide areas of the near and distant waters. According to international law New York is thus denominated a fortified city, and, as such, is properly open to bombard-

This condition would not have in it the element of peril if we could confidently count upon achieving by means of these forts all that was expected of them when their present armaments were first conceived. namely, to hold the foe so far off that none of his projectiles could fall within the city's limits. But as things are now a foe would be able to bornbard the city unless the fleet intervened. The question, therefore, presents itself. Could the navy intercept a determined enemy and prevent him from getting within striking distance

of Greater New York? Our active battle fleet to-day, on the Atlantic coast, consists mainly of thirteen dreadnoughts, one pre-dreadnought and two armored cruisers. Next in importance are the battleships and armored cruisers constituting the reserve force of the Atlantic fleet, and Great numbering in all nineteen ships. this by pro

ous disadvantage if opposed to a the heavy armored ships. battle cruiser. It is doubtful if more

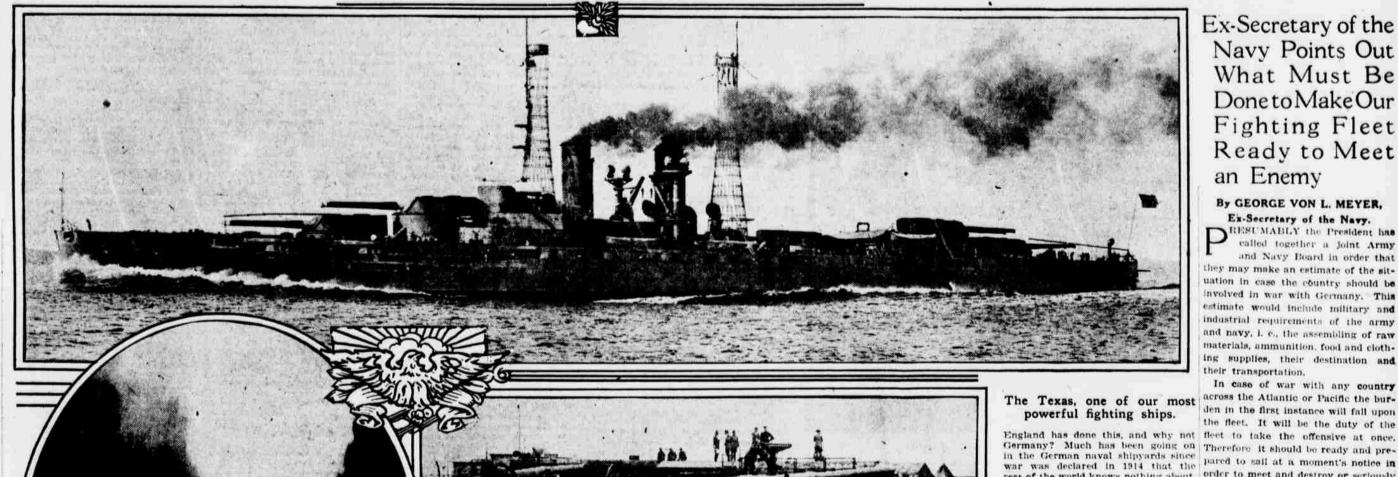
According to the Navy List we have new engines, and neither of the sister hips is capable of doing the work for was originally designed. cations. and the Chester carried off the palm y making a record of 26.5 knots when she was first tested, but there the glory ended for each.

was not long after they were completed that their commanding officers discovered that the scout cruisers speeds in service and when ploughing along through a rough sea. They were structurally too weak to stand the pounding of the waves and tactically proved but little better than magnified torpedo boat destroyers. Emphasis is laid upon the failure of our scout cruisers because craft of this sort would be likely to be sorely needed if we should come to blows with a pow

True, we have the cruisers Columbla, Minneapolis and Olympia available in the Atlantic, vessels originally capable of making from 21 to 23 knots. or a combined speed of 21.5 knots. As scouting speeds go to-day, however, this is hardly sufficient to put these ships in line for the advance service expected of an effective screen interposed between our dreadnought squadrons and the enemy's scouting craft, always assuming that the foe would come equipped with ships of the very latest pattern.

Among naval men it was commonly estimated before the European war that for every heavy ship of the line there should be at least four seaoing destroyers. Counting the active Atlantic fleet and the reserve Atlantic fleet we have at our disposal on the eastern coast a total of thirty-one battleships and dreadnoughts, for which there should be a complement

of 124 destroyers. As a matter of fact we have with e active fleet fifty destroyers here in the Atlantic and have none in reerve to make up for losses or breakdowns that would inevitably occur in time of war. Therefore, in case of



Twelve inch mortars in action. The "long arm" of our seacoast

defences.

this by providing a much larger quota mine depot ships San Francisco and battleships and armored cruisers are fixed by American naval authorities out of date and quite incapable of prior to 1914. Had those contending doing more than playing the part of a fleets been any less generously prosecond line of defence, and there are vided with these scouting and screennot enough men available to man ing craft they would not have been them and to make them fit to do even able to fight the battles that they did. in need of new engines, and a number and strategic unit, and these vessels of the vessels have structural defects have vital parts to perform aside from that would place them at a very seri- their immediate associate service with

Finally, we come to the inner line than a third of this reserve force of defence in which the submarine would be able to render a helpful ac- figures. To-day our submarine force count of itself if contending with on the Atlantic seaboard is composed wift battle craft of the up to date of twenty-three craft, and six of these are stationed in the Canal Zone at Cristobal. Three more of them, the sidered effective military units be-

True, the Birmingham made some-thing over 24 knots on her trial trip but fourteen submarines for the de-What m fence of the Atlantic seaboard, with a has one submarine for every two miles guard her shores from approach.

screen or in dealing promptly and and certain sea areas that should be cordon. And if these vessels of comvigorously with enemy submarines. Abroad the destroyer losses have vent an enemy from establishing bases able to do this why not other and ships our shortage becomes very conseaboard from Eastport, Me., to Key

West, Fla. naval force on the Pacific coast, because none of those fighting ships, and most of them are of the lesser orders. would be of much avail here in the Atlantic. Anyway they could not be detached until we were sure that the western coast was in no wise imperilled. Therefore, with this somehree scout cruisers, the Birmingham. boats of the G class, are assigned to what hasty review of the strength of liester and Salem. The last needs experimental work and are not con- the Atlantic fleet, let us see what might be our problem if Germany cause of certain inherent disqualifi- were able to send over here a squadron of battle cruisers, or, as Rear Ad-This leaves immediately available miral Sims has called them, "glorified

been very great, and both Germany of operation there or to lay a trap and Great Britain clearly anticipated for him? At present we have the the battle cruiser type? We know, of course, that the Ger-Unfortunately the bulk of these of destroyers per battleship than was Baltimore, each capable of planting man battle cruisers suffered something like three hundred mines during the two North Sea fights, but in fairly rapid succession. When we those losses and injuries by no means that the Germans have warrant the assumption found it necessary to employ a good Kaiser's Admiralty has not been busy many more than this number of mine in replacing the losses and even adding to the original number of these One of the battleships is The destroyer is an invaluable tactical spicuous in view of the length of our necessary modern navel fighting units.

A battery of ten inch guns in

one of our coast forts.

to strike again ere long, and in the

confusion that may follow much may

take place that would ordinarily be

veils the North Sea, and under cover

of that sort raiders and submarines

have been able to get past England's

Within the area enclosed by

the arc of the circle lie

America's military vitals.

We must remember that fog often

wellnigh impracticable.

No mention has been made of our

What must be kept continually in total stretch of 2.435 nautical miles, mind is the fact that should a break Even if all of these fourteen boats come betwen the two countries somecould be counted on confidently should thing will happen and happen sudneed arise our inadequacy is made denly. Germany has kept her offensive clear when we recall that Germany schedules wellnigh to the hour she set. True, Great Britain has undoubt-

rest of the world knows nothing about, order to meet and destroy or seriously and the Kaiser may have available to- cripple the fleet of its adversary. day an extra squadron of battle cruis-

And now we come to the question of what might happen if these ships should be available and if the Teutons ers, scout cruisers, hydroplanes, fuel determined to risk sending an army ships, ammunition ships and supply of invasion 100,000 strong-a force that would make relatively little difference in Germany's Continental battle strength but would figure potently stroy the enemy's fleet it will then be against anything we might immediately interpose here. This very problem has been studied by our navy; in fact the fleet actually simulated the

(Continued on Second Page.)

The forts defending New York. These seacoast bat-teries leave a deep water area undefended to the south of Rockaway Beach, whence enemy dreadnoughts could completely dominate a re-gion within a radius of twenty miles without being touched by the guns of our

ADIUS

SANDY HOOK

sighted and foolish economy. This money would have been used in safeguarding the country by accumulating surplus ammunition supply, which has been shown to be so vital and Much time has been needlessly lost building the ships authorized by Congress during the past three years In the meantime the cost of material

and construction has been increasing with leaps and bounds and it will require additional appropriation to complete the battleships and naval vessels already authorized.

Unnecessary delay is toking place n account of a continuous contention between our Secretary and the shipbuilders and an unwillingness on his part to meet them in a spirit which might result in business on a bosis that would be mutually satisfactory. This avoidable delay and lack of decision has been due to an unwillingness on his part to get together with the various Shipbuilding companies. It may result in a cost to the Clayernment and to the country incalculable in dollars and cents.

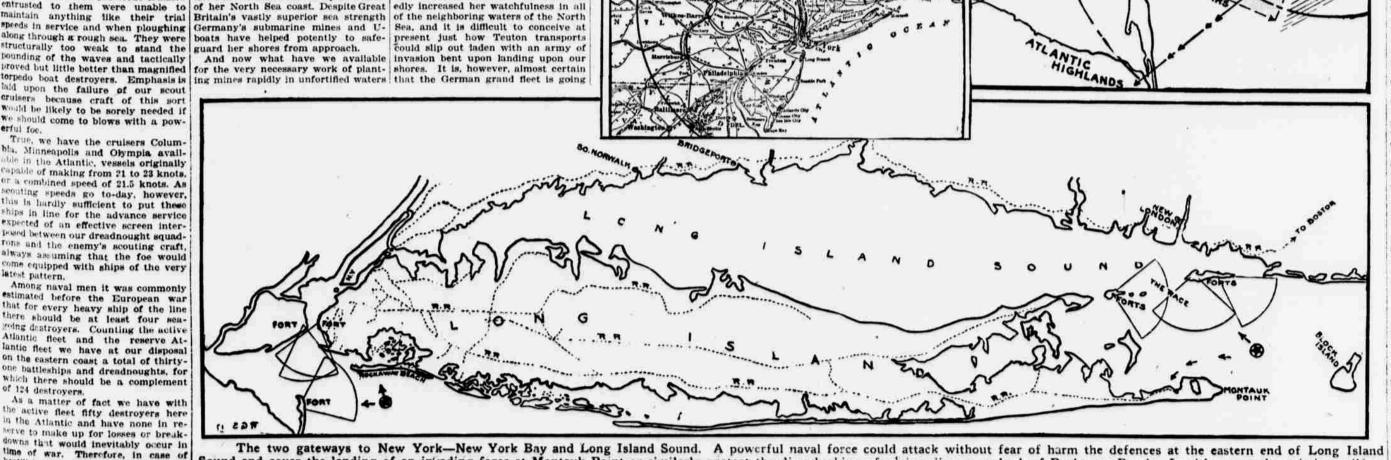
The Government should take steps at once to bring about an enlistment of an additional 25,000 men now required in the navy and a Lo,000 men, made up of blue lackets who have been in the navy or whose term of enlistment had expired or who had been bonorably discharged. England's large naval reserve in this war enabled the experienced officers ord men to go to sen at once where they were needed and their places on shore to be filled from the reserve

And again vacancies must be filled from the reserve to take the place of deaths and casualties. We have no reserve force to fall back upon for quipping the naval vessels that are necessary to be placed in commission hould war come upon us.

In addition there are certain raw materials absolutely required for war that could only be obtained from Chile or manufactured by processes which have not yet been established in this country. It would be necessary for the Government to make requisition of certain vessels in order to import those materials to this country and if necessary to convoy these vessels under naval protection.

The experience of England has shown that a fleet of motor boats should be assembled at various points so that they may furnish patrol duty at our principal ports and to safeguard our ships from submarine at-

In order that all these results may be brought about an organization must be formed and established at Washington, corresponding to the general staffs in England or Germany, that our Administration may pass with as little confusion and delay as possible from a peace basis to a war basis. This preparatory organization, known as a general staff, should have been established in the navy as soon as war broke out in Europe; for without proper organization a country cannot have efficiency and without efficiency one cannot have victory and without victory in war one could not



Sound and cover the landing of an invading force at Montauk Point or similarly protect the disembarking of an invading army back of Rockaway Beach. In either case the existing railway have safety for our people or preserve hampered in maintaining an effective lines would become immediately available for the foe's advance and support while marching upon New York city. Stars indicate where enemy may attack and cover landing of invading force.